

We Will Win

James 5:7-11

Dr. Paul Cannings

A. Learn to Wait (vs. 7-8):

1. Therefore – Despite the abuse of the rich (5:1-6), a believer must not take things into their own hands. They must wait for God's timing.

a) In this section of scripture, believers were suffering at the hands of the rich, so James wants to encourage them. The rich in the church were exploiting them by taking the best seats and eating the Lord's Supper before the poor could get to church. The poor may have become angry, which created the fighting and quarreling, with the rich being too proud to respond appropriately.

2. Be patient - In the midst of trials, we must not allow the difficulties we may encounter to make us despondent, causing us to not remain faithful in our obedience to the Lord or become double-minded and not experience God's blessings (James 1:5-8; 1 Peter 1:3-9).

b) "Be patient" (*makrothymēsaite*) comes from a compound of "long" (*makros*) and "temper" (*thymos*). The idea is to set the timer of one's temper for a long run. Think long. Focus on the final lap in the race of life. Have a long fuse. Look ahead to the Lord's coming. The essence of patience is furthermore seen in the farmer who waits patiently (*makrothymōn*) for the needed rains and the ultimate valuable (lit., "precious") crop. ^[1]

3. Be patient - Like a long-distance runner, we need to be so focused on finishing the race we become compelled to endure (Hebrews 12:1).

c) As an example of one who must exercise patience, James cites the case of the farmer who waits for the precious fruit of the earth. In Palestine the early rain (October—November) came after the crops were planted, and the latter rain (April—May) when they were maturing. Both were crucial for the success of the crops. ^[2]

4. Be patient - When we don't understand why we are suffering, we must once and for all decide to trust God because we know He cares (Romans 8:28,31; 1 Peter 5:7-8).

d) *Patience* means “to stay put and stand fast when you'd like to run away.” Many Greek scholars think that “long-suffering” refers to patience with respect to persons, while “endurance” refers to patience with respect to conditions or situations. ^[3]

5. Brethren – We must work hard to remain cohesive (4:1-12; Matthew 24:12).

6. The coming of the Lord - The presence of the Lord who has all authority, dominion, and power and sincerely desires to have a relationship with us must always remain in our minds (John 15:1-5; 1 John 3:1-3). This is the mark we must press to (Philippians 3:12-16).

7. The farmer waits - Our patience and desire to experience the presence of the Lord should cause us to continuously persistently wait with great expectations for God to produce the anticipated results, just like a farmer is ready to receive the produce of his valuable crop.

a) Every passage in which the language of “early and late rains” appears in the Old Testament affirms God’s faithfulness to His people. James’s readers may have detected an “echo” of this faithfulness theme in the illustration. ^[4]

8. Patient — Like the farmer, who does not become fainthearted, we must not be hasty, quick-tempered , or despondent when waiting on the Lord to free us from difficult issues or circumstances.

a) We do not expect to have everything easy and comfortable in this present life. “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). Paul reminded his converts that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). We must patiently endure hardships and heartaches until Jesus returns. ^[5]

9. Strengthen your hearts – Our hearts, because it is where all our emotions reside, can control the directions of our lives, so we are commanded to once and for all remain committed to the Lord’s Word so that in the midst of our stresses, we stay sober-minded .

a) The point is not the length of time one must wait (i.e. *parousia* delay), but whether one will endure the period of waiting, for James explains the first imperative by a second one: “establish your hearts,” meaning to stand firmly

in the faith, not to give way to doubt (Jdg. 15:5–8; Pss. 57:7; 90:17; Sir. 6:37; 22:16–17; 1QH 2:7; 7:6; Rom. 1:11; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 2:17; Heb. 13:9; cf. G. Harder, *TDNT* VII, 655–657). ^[6]

10. Coming of the Lord is near - Because the Lord is all-powerful, and has all authority, there is no way anything can ever stop Him from fulfilling His promise to fellowship with Him forever.

a) The nearness of the eschatological day is not just an impetus to look forward to the judgment of “sinners” and so stand fast in faith oneself (μακροθυμέω). Still, it is also a warning to examine one’s behavior so that when the one whose footsteps are nearing finally knocks on the door, one may be prepared to open, for open one must, either for blessing or for judgment. The coming Lord is also the judge of the Christian. ^[7]

11. Coming of the Lord is near – The Lord will return, and He is a just God, so we know our suffering will not last forever.

B. Don’t Fight Your Own Battles (vs. 9):

1. Do not complain – We are commanded to continuously not internally express intense groans against anyone (Philippians 2:2:14; Colossians 3:13).

a) Telling them not to grumble in verse 9 is a repeat of 4:1-5, 4:11-12.

b) Maybe one of the things that James is dealing with here is that the believers were playing church, they complained about being in trials, they were double-minded, getting caught up in temptation, and anger (Zealots fighting Rome), hearing the word but not living it, and responding to people based on their financial status. They demonstrated intellectual and static faith but not dynamic faith because they were more religious than true to God's Word.

2. Brethren – We are the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-7); we cannot win this fight without one another (Ephesians 4:11-16).

3. Brethren – If Satan divides us, no one will stand (Luke 11:17; James 4:6-10; Matthew 24:12). We need each other, so we cannot allow our circumstances to cause us to turn on each other.

4. You yourself may not be judged – “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.” (Matthew 7:3-5; NASU)

a) What is clear is that the author is calling on Christians not to take the judgment of the wicked into their own hands but to wait for God to avenge them; at the same time, they are called not to compromise the faith; both giving in to the world and attacking the world is wrong (e.g., Heb. 6:12, 15; Heb. 10:32–39; 12:1ff.; 1 Pet. 4:12–19; Rom. 12:9–21; Rev. 13:10; 14:12; even in Revelation the ἄγιοι never strike back, but Christ avenges them; cf. F.

Horst, *TDNT* IV, 374–387; F. Hauck, *TDNT* IV, 581–588; U. Falkenroth and C. Brown, *DNTT* II, 768–776).^[8]

5. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door - Christ knows each person's motives completely, and at His coming, He is set to judge us all.
6. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door - Endure the trial trusting Him to take care of the problems you experience (Romans 12:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:16).
No need to fight our own battles.

C. Wait to Win (vs. 10-11):

1. Example of suffering and patience – There are those we can learn from who endured evil and afflictions while remaining self-restraint, did not complain, retaliated, or functioned in a hasty manner.
2. Take the prophets – An example of one of these individuals is those who foretell God's divine will; did so under much affliction but remained faithful while consistently fulfilling their responsibilities.
 - a) But of all prophets whom James must have had in mind, perhaps the most outstanding in this connection is Jeremiah, who later became known as 'the weeping prophet,' so frequently did the Jews of subsequent generations look back to him for inspiration and encouragement in their own trials and persecutions.
3. Spoke the name of the Lord – These prophets, at the risk of their lives, openly delivered God's messages which declared the nature and reputation of the Lord.

4. We count those blessed who endured - When we reflect on the many Bible characters who continuously remained faithful in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances, which includes Job, the negative circumstances became favorable and satisfying, which could only be attributed to the work of God (Romans 8:28).

5. We count those blessed who endured - Those who endure this process have a guaranteed victory (James 1:12). It is reckoned to them – put in their account for the Lord to bless them for being faithful in the midst of difficulty for His causes.

6. You have heard of the endurance of Job – The story of Job was clearly understood among these believers. They clearly understood how Job remained faithful, trusting the Lord no matter the resistance he received from his friends or the extremely horrifying difficulties he encountered.

a) The whole structure of the book of Job was probably meant to encourage Israel after the exile. However, God's justice seemed far away and the nations mocked them, and God would ultimately vindicate them and end their captivity. Hellenistic Jewish tradition further celebrated Job's endurance.

b) Job is set forth as an example of one who “endured” (5:11). Despite his sufferings, he refused to renounce God (Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:15; 16:19; 19:25). The outcome of the Lord’s dealings with him was Job’s complete vindication (Job 42:7–17).^[9]

c) “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him” (13:15). He was convinced that “his witness was in heaven and his record with the most high” (16:19); and he knew that his Redeemer was alive (19:28).

7. They have seen the outcome of the Lord – They have full knowledge, complete understanding of how the Lord rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and will return soon. Some of these believers were in Jerusalem and have eye witness accounts from the original disciples of Christ.

8. The Lord is full of compassion – The One who reigns, despite the extreme horrifying circumstances He experienced, continuously has deep emotional feelings for those who are enduring distress; He with all His heart cares.

a) The two concepts of patient endurance (5:7–8, 10–11) and the Lord's coming (5:7–9, 11) are built upon the outcome of the Lord's dealings: compassion and mercy (5:11). James has returned again to perseverance during life's various trials (1:3–4). [\[10\]](#)

9. The Lord is full of compassion – There is no need for us to give up because the Lord has a sense of grief and sorrow for all those who suffer for His purposes.

a) The reason for this hope is clear: God is not vicious; He does not love watching people suffer. Rather He is compassionate. [\[11\]](#) We do have the responsibility to resist Satan (4:7-10).

10. The Lord is full of compassion - The Lord is deeply sympathetic to our pain. He willingly responds to the groans of our heart (Romans 8:26; Hebrews 3:14; 4:14-16) and comforts us when we grieve (John 14:1-3). He promises to never give us more than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).

a) The distinction between this and οἰκτίρμων, *merciful*, seems to be that the former denotes the *general quality* of compassion, while the latter emphasizes the sympathy called out by special cases, being the feeling which is moved to pain at another's suffering. [\[12\]](#)

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